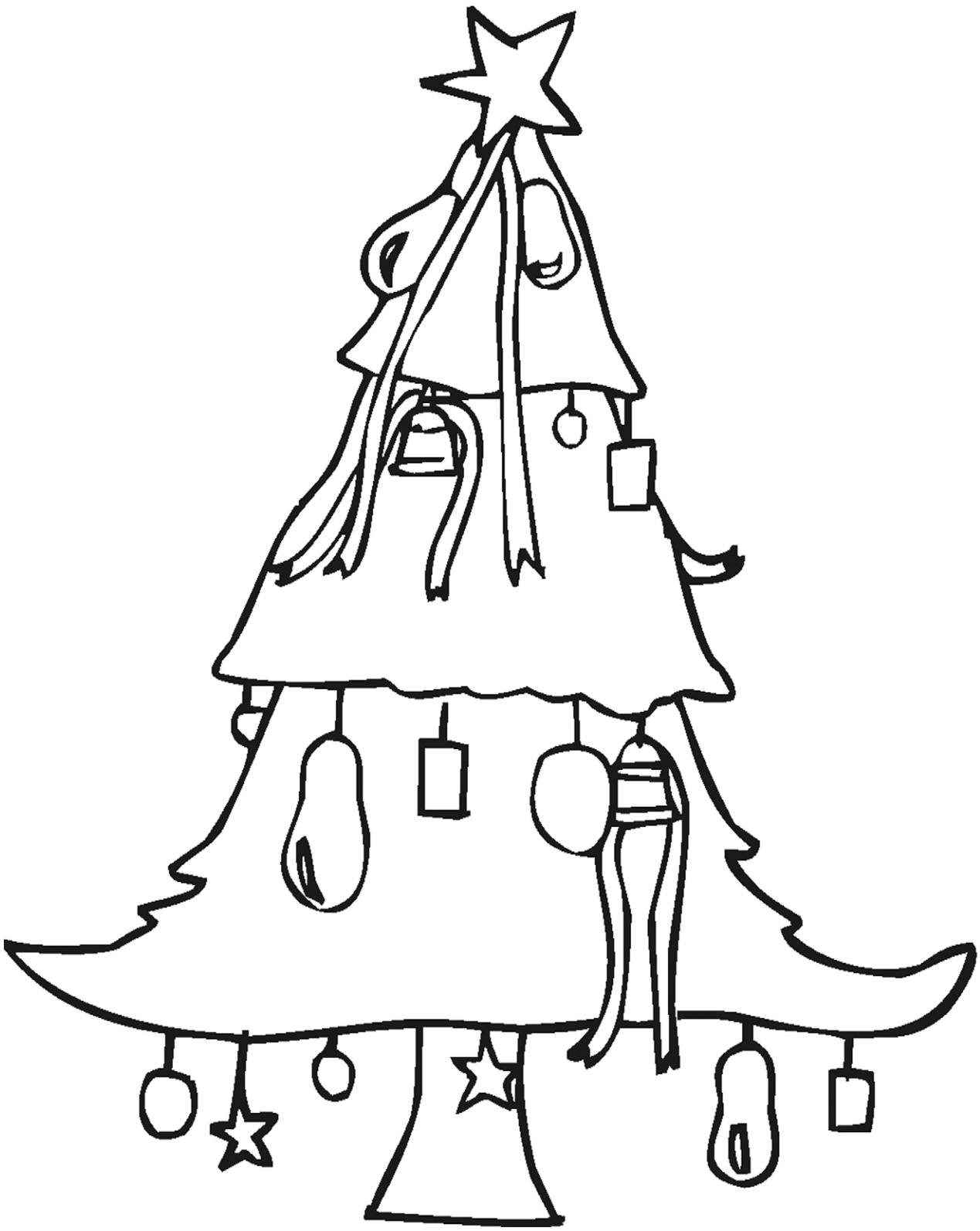
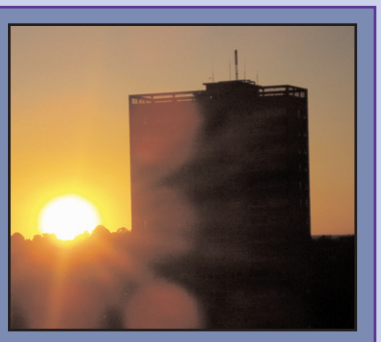
Issue 46 December 2005

Leys News



Competition just for young people - colour in the tree and send it in to Leys News - we will be awarding a prize for the best one!



Your 2006 Planner plus a look back at the year that was 2005, on the centre pages

Seasons' Greetings to everyone on the Leys! Check out some special messages on page 7

Get Competitive and win two tickets to the Snow Queen extravaganza at the BMW Theatre - check out p 10

About Leys News

Leys News Ltd is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community.
Leys News is not affiliated to any political party.
Leys News operates an equal opportunities policy and encourages any resident to get involved in its work.

Contact: Leys News Limited, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX
Phone: 01865 711756
Email: leysnews@hotmail.com
Website: www.leysnews.co.uk

Who's who?

Board of Directors: Penny Wood, Chuma Nwokolo, Jr., Roy Simmonds, Wendy Spray, Etain O'Carroll, Peter Stevenson and Gerry Webb.

Editorial committee this issue: Phil Citrone, Julian Dourado, Sasha East, Chuma Nwokolo, Jr., Roy Simmonds and Jennie Travis.

Editor: Becky Telford

Business Development Co-ordinator: Philip Citrone

Distribution co-ordinator: Gary Jones

Website development: Julian Dourado, Joe Rosa and Julia Sutton

Volunteers and contributors: Anna Bartlett, Jim Barlow, Richard Colbrook, Kate Dunsdon, Sasha East, Frank Isahak, MJ Gohari, Jing Li, Patrick Mukholi, Lina Mughal, Chuma Nwokolo, Jr, Roy Simmonds, Jennie Travis, and all the people who worked on the other 2005 editions.

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Ealing Family Housing Association · European Union European Social Fund · OCHA · Oxford City Council

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. . . Editoral . . .

Welcome to this festive edition of Leys news!

For those people who celebrate Christmas, there are church opening times and news along with a wonderful story about celebrating Christmas in Tanzania, all on page 15. There are also a few thoughts about Kwanzaa. If you celebrate a festival, you might want to get in touch with us and tell us why it's important to you, and spread a bit of the festive spirit!

Lots of the paper is a look back over the last year on the Leys. As I took over the job of Editor in April this year, I have seen most of the year through the Leys News lens. Some of it has been great, some has been upsetting but it has all been fascinating! My first edition of the paper looked at health care provision on the Leys, and the plans for the new health centre. Over the last few months, the new centre has been growing before our eyes, and it's apparently on track for a 10th January opening.

Watching things grow has been one of the great pleasures of this year. The GLOW project was getting off the ground when I started in April, and grew to be a fantastic project which got loads of residents involved in expressing themselves through singing, writing, photography and a host of other multimedia projects. The strong positive spirit is set to continue, with a final performance in early December and a permanent public art project to create a 'GLOW Tree' set to start in December - check out page 4 for more.

Other great things I have seen going on here on the Leys have been: BLAG, brightening up every corner with their interactive art work; the Leys Music Recording Studio, supporting local people to make great music and getting an almost 100% pass rate with their BTEC students; CDI youth projects, providing things to do for local young people throughout the holidays; Leys Fair; local music and dance exhibitions which have shown off the amazing talents of our young people and the commitment of those who work with them; small local acts of goodwill and care (many of which have come out in the Leys Personality pieces this year) which are one of the things that make the Leys such a great place to live. I'm sure that I have missed out a whole host of things which have made this year - if you have any you want to add, just drop me a line! The calendar on the centre pages gives you a planner for 2006 along with some pictures of 2005.

Of course, not everything has been perfect. The have been incidents of violence and anti-social behaviour, some of which have been discussed in Leys News and some of which have been kept quiet. Dealing with these kinds of incidents is something we need to work together on, supporting those who need our help and coming together as a community to deal with the after effects and repercussions.

And there's lots to look forward to next year, and plenty of interesting possibilities. Keep reading the Leys News and you'll find out! And if you have any of the answers, be sure to get in touch with us to share them.

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a peaceful and happy New Year,

Becky Telford
Editor

Been let down with your leaflet distribution?

We can help.

Call the leaflet sales team on (01865) 425349 or (01865) 425371

Visit our website at www.thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/leaflets

Citizens of Oxford 2015 - looking back to the future

A film commissioned by Modern Art Oxford recording Oxford residents' dreams, plans and visions for the future of their city will become part of the Oxfordshire Studies collections at Oxford Central Library from January 2006. The Gallery is donating a copy of the DVD so that today's residents can see into the future and the real citizens of Oxford 2015 will be able to judge how accurate those visions were.

Twelve local people's visions for the future of Oxford were recorded by film-maker Martin Wilkinson, in a film initially exhibited at Modern Art Oxford as part of Oxford 2015 in June 2005. Asked about what they would like to see in Oxford by 2015, Interviewing Oxford includes surprising visions from residents that range from university students, to a single mother from Greater Leys, local architects and Alex Hollingsworth, former leader of Oxford City Council. Wilkinson says: 'Amongst these twelve people there's a real breadth of viewpoint - from young mothers, pensioners, teenagers to architects, local politicians and environmental activists. I hope the DVD set will be a useful aid to anyone in the future who wants to find out what people in Oxford today felt about the city'.

Who knows what the real citizens of Oxford 2015 will make of it?

The DVDs will be available to the public for reference at Oxfordshire Studies in Oxford Central Library. Please call 01865 815749 for more information.

LEYS NEWS
design services

We now offer a range of design services aimed at delivering to local businesses and community groups an affordable solution to all their marketing and design needs.

Graphic design

From simple logos and stationery through to full colour page layouts for brochures. Our group of local designers offer a friendly and attentive approach.

Training

Professional help for organisations wishing to produce their own promotional materials. Our quality training is both cost effective and relevant.

Interested? call Phil on Oxford 711756
or visit www.leysnewsdesign.co.uk

Leys News No: 47

Out Early February 2006

Copy And Advertising Deadline:

3rd January 2006

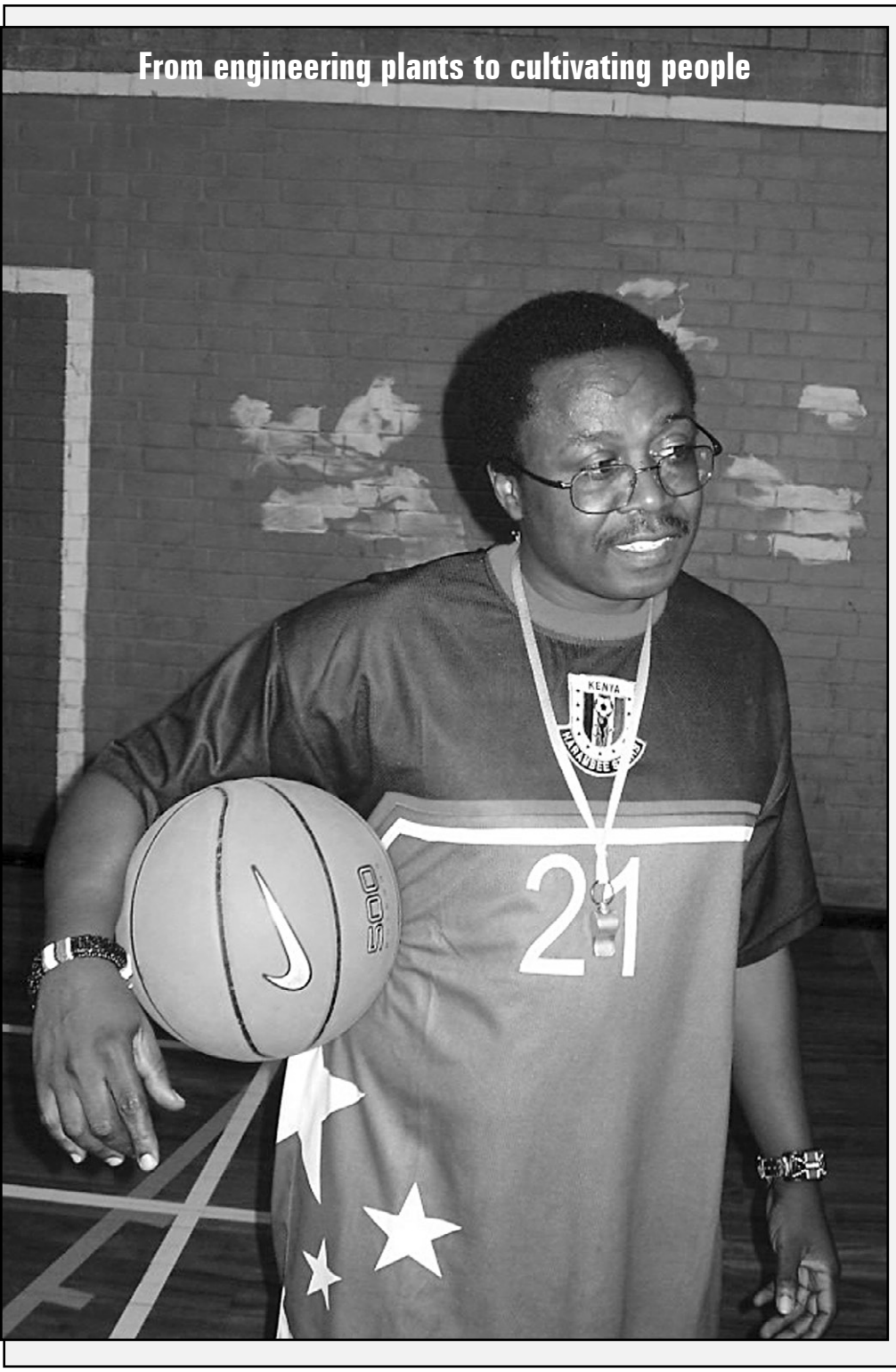
Want to Advertise in Leys News?

We have special rates for community and not-for-profit organisations.

Get in touch with Phil on 711756!

Leys Personality - Patrick Mukholi

From engineering plants to cultivating people



Patrick Mukholi is a popular face at the Leys Community Centre at Blackbird Leys where he is spending his third year as a youth worker with Oxford Youth Works, but it was a very strange path that brought him to his life's work. He was halfway through his degree in Agricultural Engineering in Nairobi when he became a Christian. He knew then that he would spend his life helping to cultivate people, not plants. He finished his degree all the same, married his university sweetheart, Helen, and worked for the next eight years as an agricultural engineer in Kilifi, Kenya.

Pat, who speaks English, Swahili and Luhya is used to travelling. As a child he often had to relocate with his father whose job with the East African Railways took him all over the place. From Kilifi he went on to Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology where he took a Masters of Divinity, before moving to Mombasa where he worked with the Anglican Diocese as Youth Director. So; has he any regrets, leaving engineering for youth work? "I have no regrets. My time in engineering was God's call at that time. Right now, I love what I do." And what he does right now is stay very busy! His typical day takes him from his Youth Club at the Holy Family Church (where they make music and play games) through his youth sessions at the Community Centre right down to the neighbouring schools where he works with young people.

As for the culture shock of the Kenya immigrant, Pat has had his share: "Despite our six months' orientation at Crowther Hall, Birmingham, we still arrived in Blackbird Leys with our African mindset. We discovered a lot of reserve here. In Kenya, everyone greets everyone. The youths greet first, and respectfully. We were shocked at the way youths speak back to elders, parents and teachers. That was one shock." There were many other positive shocks: he is surprised when people complain about the NHS, the roads, and the 'late' trains. The other day a rail company bought them a meal to apologise for a late connection! "Despite all we heard about Blackbird Leys, we were amazed at the range of free opportunities available through the BLITZ, the library, and the colleges."

What are his goals for the next ten years? "To have helped to create a place, a forum, where young people can feel safe to ask personal questions, questions about jobs, or to talk about their own lives, especially their relationship with God." In the distant future he will probably take a teaching degree; he'd love to work in a college as a teacher or chaplain, influencing people towards what is good and Godly.

In the meantime, he's having fun, challenging - and being challenged by - young people on the Leys.

By Chuma Nwokolo Jr.

A letter from the Barn Youth Project...

Hiya Readers,

My name is Luan Brothwood and I am a volunteer worker for the Barn Youth Project, Nightingale Avenue in Greater Leys. I am currently a 1st year student studying Youth and Community Work at Ruskin College.

I have worked at the Barn since March this year and I love it. We run a session every Wednesday evening 7.30 to 9.30 for young people 13 and over for only 10p admission. The session involves basketball and indoor football, pool and football table, computers with internet access, Play Station with games, TV with DVD player and if anyone fancies themselves as a bit of DJ or wants to challenge with their own lyrics come along and sample our decks.

We run a tuck shop throughout the evening but if you fancy something healthier then get involved with setting up our new smoothies and home cooking project (T.B.C). If you come along and maybe there is something else you want to do then let us know and we will try our hardest to make it happen.

GIVE US A TRY, YOU NEVER KNOW, YOU MIGHT LIKE IT....!

For more information please contact Katy Hamilton via The Barn.

Do you want to let readers know about what your organisation is up to? Drop us a line at leysnews@hotmail.com or ring 711756. Make sure you include all the information you think people might need.

Positive changes for Orchard Meadow Primary

Orchard Meadow Primary School re-opened on 1st November in premises newly refurbished by the Kidlington-based company Kingerlee Ltd.

We have finally got the building that the children deserve. A quality working environment is good for everyone, both staff and children. I'm sure it will have positive effects on standards.

The School will be having an official opening on Friday 3rd February 2006. We will be trying to contact past pupils, especially anyone who was at the original opening in the late 1950s, when it was known as Blackbird Leys Junior School. If you can help, get in touch on 01865 778609.

Michele Stuart

Continuing to GLOW

Work will soon begin on a new participatory Public Art project for the Blackbird Leys Community Centre. Sculptor Neil Wood has been appointed to work with the community to design a landmark feature for the front of the centre. In addition to a series of participatory workshops with the community, Neil will also mentor 2 members of the Blackbird Leys Artists Group as part of the commission and deliver customised training sessions to help build the capacity in aspiring artists.
Neil brings extensive experience with a prolific body of major commissions behind him, including a Commemorative Sculpture for the mining industry opened in Cannock by Arts Minister Estelle Morris in 2004. Other work he has produced around the country includes site-specific commissions for a church, a wide range of businesses and also Birmingham Central Registry Office (2005). He has taught sculpture as a lecturer at Staffordshire University since 1992 as well as Stafford College, where he was Head of Fine Art and Sculpture, and also has worked as a visiting lecturer for the Frink School of Figurative Sculpture. He is looking forward to working with the people of Blackbird Leys and particularly helping local artists skill up for professional work

The Glow Tree Commission was devised through a series of steering group meetings that included members of BLAG, Leys Link, the Leys Community Development Initiative (CDI), Neighbourhood Renewal, the Community Centre, and Fusion, Oxford's Community Arts Agency. It aims to build on past community consultations and learning projects to create a permanent visual legacy that celebrates life on the Leys. Fusion will also be working with BLAG to develop their project management skills for future work.

The project is part of the Evolving City Programme, coordinated by Oxford Inspires and funded by the Urban Cultural Programme (National Lottery, Millennium Commission and Arts Council).

There will be a community workshop on Dec 12th in the art room from 9am - 4pm to make clay reliefs with the artist and a follow up workshop on Jan 10 when they will cast their models. No experience necessary, the artist Neil Wood will lead the sessions. For more info call Tara Stewart on 07786 171056, or talk to BLAG.

SHARP LABORATORIES OF EUROPE

WERE PLEASED TO CO-SPONSOR THE 2005 FUTURE GLOW YOUTH PROJECT, ORGANISED BY LEY'S LEARNING NETWORK

...FUTURE GLOW...

Sharp Laboratories of Europe Limited, based on the Oxford Science Park were delighted to co-sponsor the 'Future Glow' youth project for 20 young people aged 9 - 16 during the summer half term.

The young people were given the chance to create five-minute video's based on what makes them 'glow' (i.e. what inspires and uplifts them) by writing and recording a song or creating a music video. At the end of the project, the young people had created MTV style DVDs at Leys Music Recording Studio and BLITZ ICT Hub.

The feedback from the young people was "why can't we do projects like this everyday and not just in the school holidays".

The photo shows three of the young people creating their 'image' possibly for a future career in the music industry!!

Marsha Jackson, of the Learning Network commented "Young people have so much talent, I'm just glad that the CDI can help develop it".

LORD MAYOR'S DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME

Helping people in housing need rent a home

Landlords...

Do you have... a spare room, or self-contained accommodation available to let?

We can provide.....

* Guaranteed Deposit bond
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* Professional Inventory
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* Tenant's saving scheme
* Clients looking for properties

Can we help?

Contact us now on 01865 782539 / 782520 / 782540
or check out www.oxforddeposit.org.uk

East Oxford Action
OCHA
Lord Mayor of Oxford Charity Trust, 244 Barns Road Oxford OX4 3RW
Registered Charity No. 259588
supported by Oxford City Council
SEEDA

Neighbourhood Action Team

Residents have met with members of Oxford Police, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Blackbird Leys Parish Council to raise local issues and concerns.

The group - Neighbourhood Action Team (NAT) - told members of the public what work had been carried out on 'priority problems.'

The meeting, held on Tuesday 15 November, then asked for public views on any other problems which affect residents living in Blackbird Leys.

These included - drug dealing; drinking on the streets; litter; anti-social behaviour; youths gathering outside shops; police not reporting back to people who had contacted them; football crowds walking through the estate; under-age drinking and smoking; not enough litter bins on the estate; residents putting their bins out too early; youths congregating in alleyways; mini motors and go-peds being used at the Kassam stadium.

The audience was asked to vote on three issues that they considered to most important. The clear winner was drug dealing.

The second most serious problem was anti-social behaviour and third was the police not reporting back to people who had contacted them.

The meeting ended with a reminder of the good things on Blackbird Leys. The most important was the people, the residents, YOU - the Community.

The facilities that are available for everyone was considered a good thing as well as the Oxford City Council Garden Competition which ran over the summer, the reinstated bus service to the Kassam stadium, and the Community clean-up in Falcon Close over half-term.

Members of NAT will now being working together to solve the three top priority issues and will report progress through Leys News.

We will also be asking in a few months time whether the situation has improved and whether there are any more issues on the estate.
If you would like to get involved or have any questions contact Kate Stratford (Chair of the NAT) on 01865 252 957.

Kate Stratford

Season's Greetings from all at Leys News

OCHA

OXFORD CITIZENS HOUSING ASSOCIATION

We are closed on the following dates during the festive season this year:-
Monday 26 December 2005
Tuesday 27 December 2005
Monday 2 January 2006

Closed after 1pm on Friday 23 December.

We will be open as usual on 28, 29 and 30 December 2005 between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

In the event of an emergency repair during the times we are closed, please call 01865 773000 and follow the instructions given in the message.

WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL RESIDENTS A HAPPY FESTIVE SEASON

Ealing Family Housing Association

would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Changes to Farmhouse opening times:
Friday 9th December: 9am - 11.30am
Wednesday 21st December: CLOSED
Thursday 22nd December: 9am - 5pm
Friday 23rd December: 9am - 5pm
Monday 26th December: CLOSED
Tuesday 27th December: CLOSED
Wednesday 28th December: CLOSED
Thursday 29th December: CLOSED
Friday 30th December: CLOSED
Monday 2nd January CLOSED

Over this period please contact Midas for heating problems on 01865 884920 or for all other emergency problems please contact Oxford Building Solutions on 0800 227676
If you smell gas phone Transco on 0800 111 999

The
African Caribbean Project

would like to wish all our friends, helpers and local organisations, especially the young people, a very festive season. Your valid contribution and support has seen the African Caribbean Project go from strength to strength throughout the year.

Looking forward to working with you in the New Year.

From Dolcie, Debbie, Zaki, Kerissa, Serena, Kelly and Wendy.

The **Blackbird Bonanza** Team
Wishes all its members
A Merry Christmas
And Happy New Year

Please remember the last draw will take place on Friday 16th December and the next draw will not be until Friday 6th January 2006.

If you wish to buy Christmas raffle tickets or wish to donate a prize please see either your collector or call into Pathway Workshop. The draw will take place on Friday 16th December.

Pathway Workshop

Reg charity 1014416
Dunnock Way, Blackbird Leys
01865 714111

wishes all Leys News readers a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Drop in for hand-made wooden wildlife and garden products - Ideal Christmas Presents!
Open Mon - Fri 8.30 - 4.00

10% Discount at Pathway, valid from 1/12/05 - 23/12/05
Please quote LN/DEC when ordering.

Leys Linx

The Leys Linx Centre is pleased to inform all Leys residents that the weekly Leys Linx E-Bulletin is back in circulation. To publicise your events & advertise local jobs contact Susan Fitzsimons (leyslinx@blackbirdleys.com) at the centre by midday on Thursdays.

To get on the e-mailing list to receive the Bulletin, also contact Sue.

The staff at Blackbird Leys Pool would like to wish all our customers A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you, Paul

To all colleagues and friends in the Leys, may Christmas be joyful, may 2006 bring you many good things, and may all our projects find funding!

. . . UKDADS & The Potential Project . . .

Is 'Blackbird-Leys' another word for Failure?

Are the odds simply stacking up in your life? Do you seem to be on a treadmill of fears? Are you walking the cycle of defeat? Perhaps it is time for you to take a Life Coach. **Woldu Mahary** has helped many people to make a difference in their lives in many of the 50 countries he has visited and he is delivering a free workshop on **The Secret of Success Revealed** at 6pm on Monday, 12th December, 2005, at 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford. Call 01865 779298 to book your free place, or take your chance and turn up on the day! Refreshments provided.

You Either Have it or You Don't.

Most men don't in fact, have **Testicular Cancer,** but for the few who do, the good news is that if you catch it early, it is almost always curable. These days, 9 out of 10 patients are cured. Yet, it is critical to be able to spot the symptoms early. No one knows why it happens, but we do know that certain people are more at risk. For instance, if one or both of a boy's testicles hasn't descended by the age of 7 or so, he has a greater chance of developing testicular cancer later in life.

Also your risk profile rises if a close member of your family has been diagnosed with the disease. What do you have to look out for? Warning signs such as a hard lump on the front or side of a testicle, a swelling, enlargement or pain and discomfort in a testicle or scrotum. In other words, keep your eyes on the ball - and drop into the next **Men's MOT Day** at Blackbird Leys Community Centre, at 12 noon - 4.30pm on 13th January, 2006. Remember, *your own MOT is more important than your car's!* For more info, visit www.cancerhelp.org.uk

Fathers do the Talk

After dozens of hours of interviews, the **FatherTalk** tapes are now ready! Fathers, sons and daughters bare their minds on the most thought-provoking issues in fatherhood. These are seriously no-holds-barred interviews! Old-school/new-school fatherhood, young dads, absentee fatherhood - tough questions meet frank answers and are available on 50-minute audio CDs. You can pick one a CD or download the audio from the website, www.ukdads.org - after the formal launch and presentation at the **FatherTalk Seminar** on 18th January, 2006. Call 01865 779298 or 07949230763 to book your place today.

The Newest Club in Town

picks an entertainment, enjoys it for four weeks, and meets once a month to discuss and review it over tea. That is the **Leys' Book Club** of course. The first book on the menu is Chuma Nwokolo's ***Diaries of a Dead African.*** Call 01865 779298 to join up - and pick up one of the last free introductory books on offer!

The Ashmolean relocates to the Leys

In June, 2006, part of the Ashmolean Museum's formidable collection is coming on a visit to Blackbird Leys in an historic temporary exhibition at the BBL Community Centre. This will be a great opportunity for Leys residents to see artefacts from the oldest museum in the world, which won't be available for public viewing for the next four years of the museum's extensive reconstruction. Watch this space.

Employment and Career Counselling at KFG

It is getting more difficult to be out of work and out of school! **The Potential Project** is collaborating with CfBT's **Steps to Success Project** to bring one-on-one Career and Employment Counselling to the Kingfisher Green Centre. If you are an adult with employment or training issues, call 07979 244 662 for personalised advice and guidance. Appointments can be scheduled at the 26 Kingfisher Green offices and services on offer include CV and job search guidance, internet tools, Funder-Finder software and hundreds of prospectuses and guides.

A special **Sole Trader's Survival Kit Workshop** will also hold at the Barn on Nightingale Avenue on 24th January, 2006. This free event is designed to give Sole Traders - and those thinking of going it alone - with the essentials to make a success of business life. Call 07979 244 662 today to book.

UKDads and the Potential Project Presents...

Talent Night

to be held on Friday 16th December 2005 @ BBL Youth & Community Centre

This is an evening not to be missed!

Featuring a superb showcase of local talent from across the Leys, this event aims to raise much-needed funds for the Community Centre.

Come and give your support!

As well as prizes for the most talented entertainer, there will be food and a bar available on the evening. Get ready to be entertained - by your sister, your neighbour, or even your gran!

Doors open 7:30pm - Showtime 8:30pm

Tickets cost £3 and are available from:

Agnes Smith Advice Centre (Blackbird Leys)
Rodneys Barbers (Rose Hill)
UKDads/Potential Project (Greater Leys)

For more information, email ukdadsposse@yahoo.co.uk or ring Ox 779298.

Performance Poetry Workshops

Everything

A thousand words are not enough,
To say how much you mean to me,
But one is
Everything.

It's you who makes me sing
I'm free as a bird on the wing.
No one can hear the sounds
But deep inside, my heart pounds.
I know that I am yours and you'll be mine
Until the very end of time.
With you I will always walk
I know you listen when I talk.
You accept me happy or sad
You understand when things make me mad.
You cover me with love.
I'm the hand and you're the glove.
I can't wait to see your face
So for now I'll live in your grace.

by Stephanie Wilson

Are you a poetry buff like Steph Wilson? The Potential Project is running PERFORMANCE POETRY WORKSHOPS led by award-winning poet, Afam Akeh. Pre-register now; call 01865779298.

Opportunities @ The Potential

Centre Hire
If you need to book a local and convenient party venue for your next children's event at the Kingfisher Green Centre, speak to Duncan on 01865-779298.

Volunteer Training
Trainings for project volunteers will start to run again in early 2006. You can pick up some useful skills and begin to build your CV. Call us on 01865-779298 for a discussion.

After School Club
Do you need an After-School Club? We are running consultations and would welcome any feedback - do let us know what you will like to see in your neighbourhood.

Help Needed!
Steering Group Members needed urgently for our Dads & Lads (& Lassies) project. The group meets monthly, so if you like what we do, contact Carlton at The Potential Project for further details. Get involved with your community and change things for the better.

UKDADS and the Potential Project
26 Kingfishers Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX
Telephone 01856 779298
Email ukdadsposse@yahoo.co.uk
Website: www.ukdadsposse.co.uk

Community Centre News

Leys Linx Bulletin

Leys Linx now co-ordinates an email bulletin of events and news from across the Leys. If you would like to use this space to let others know of changes/updates about your local group or organisation please e-mail Susan at leyslinx@blackbirdleys.com.

Room Hire

Don't forget that groups can book the Jack Argent Hall or Community Rooms at the Community Centre: to book these please contact: 01865 435954 or 401098.

The Barn Youth Project

There are two youth groups running in the Barn at the moment. These are: 9-13year olds on Monday, 6.30 - 8.30pm run by Marsha from CDI or 13 and overs on Wednesday 7 - 9pm run by Nicqui. If you know of anyone who might be interested in attending please let them know these are on. For more information please contact Jenni on 01865 334802.

BLITZ NEWS

Gown comes to Town

Blackbird Leys IT Hub in partnership with Oxford University's Department of Continuing Education is offering local people a chance to attend one of three free courses held locally but taught by one of the university's own lecuturers!!

The courses will provide new skills and a deeper understanding of each theme set to include: The Wider Web (Exploring the world of the internet and the web), Calculating with Your Computer (Using spreadsheet applications to make complex calculations) and Organising your Life with Your Computer (databases, calendars and other useful tools), those that complete a course could move on to study one of their CAT point accredited weekly courses at Rewley House in the heart of Oxford University. There are also bursaries available to cover the cost of these courses.

Full cost of childcare can also be reimbursed for those that need it to study.

These courses start in January and will run for 5 weeks. There are a limited number of places available, please get in touch as soon as possible to ensure a place on one of these courses.

Learn Direct Venture

If you've always wanted to do a course but could never find the time or get it to fit in your busy schedule you can now take advantage of the wide range of learn direct courses available from the IT Hub. Study at your own pace from just one hour per week with our tailor made courses with individual support and tuition provided at no extra cost. Courses are either free or low cost depending on individual circumstances, so please get in touch with the team at the IT Hub to find out more.

Courses we are offering include: Introductory computer courses, Using Office Applications and Web Publishing and the internationally recognised IT qualification ECDL, some English and maths courses are also available too including the opportunity to gain a level 1 or level 2 nationally recognised qualification.

These open up doorways for people who, for example, work shifts and are unable to commit themselves to a weekly session in a traditional course. Once enrolled, you are able to access your course from any location that has a computer and the internet, and are welcome to use the drop in services at the hub if you want to.

IT Courses for a wide range of interests

Blackbird Leys IT Hub is currently offering a wide range of computer courses from introductory computer courses through to multimedia and computer arts to technical and networking.

In January we will be launching a new programme of courses set to include: Beginners Computer Course, Build and Upgrade Your Computer, Presentation Skills, Digital Photography, Flash Animation, Web Design and video editing Create Computer Music. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining any of these courses.

We will also be running some taster sessions around subjects such as touch typing, internet shopping, email extras and creating PDFs.

User Forum - Share Your Views

If you would like to be more involved in the planning of courses and other sessions at the IT hub or would like an input into the way the place is run then please come along and join our user forum, meetings are monthly and usually last just one hour.

Coffee Morning

Open Coffee Morning, 10 - 12am on Saturday 10th December.

Contact the IT Hub by phoning 714492 or drop into the Leys Linx Centre at the front of the community centre Blackbird Leys Road Oxford. Opening times are: Monday to Friday 9.30 - 4.30 and Saturday 9.30 - 1.30.

January

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Brought to you by Leys News - the community paper for the whole of the Leys. How will you get involved in 2006? Ring 711756 or email mail@leysnews.co.uk for more details!

Write a letter to the editor

Join the management committee and help run the organisation

HELP US TAKE PHOTOS OF LOCAL EVENTS

Write articles on subjects that interest you

All the photos on this page have appeared in Leys News during 2005. A huge thank you to everyone who has been involved!

take out an advert

GET IT OFF YOUR CHEST WITH A SOAP BOX PIECE

Join the editorial board and share your ideas

Competition Corner

Up for grabs...

A pair of tickets to see The Snow Queen at BMW Group Plant Oxford!

Creation Theatre Company works its magic this Christmas in a striking new space inside BMW Group Plant Oxford. Set in a strange snow-filled world of talking animals, breathtaking roller-skating displays and colourful song and dance routines set to an original score, The Snow Queen is full of sparkle and invention.

Director Charlotte Conquest's vibrant and visual style brings Hans Christian Anderson's tale of love, adversity, magic and mystery to life and promises to be a festive treat for everyone to enjoy.

The Snow Queen runs from 22nd November 2005 - 7th January 2006. To book tickets, ring the Box Office on 01865 245745 or check out www.creationtheatre.co.uk.

To win this fantastic prize, simply send your name and address to us here at Leys News:
T: 01865 711756
E: leysnews@hotmail.com
A: 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, OX4 7BX

Photo © Sherry Aldworth

CDI - the Leys Community Development Initiative

Community Fund-Raising

The Leys CDI is organising a free workshop for local groups and individuals:

'An Introduction to Fund-Raising'

Run by David Fisher of OCVA

Thursday 5 January 2006
In the Jack Argent Room, Blackbird Leys Community Centre
From 11.00am to 3.00pm

Lunch will be provided - for catering purposes it is essential to book a place.

Please ring 395927

supported by OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

LONG AND BORING CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY?

AGED BETWEEN 9-19?

COME TO THE CDI CHRISTMAS PROJECT

LOADS OF MUSIC, ART, IT, SPORTS & A CHRISTMAS PARTY

19TH - 23RD DECEMBER

HELD @ BBL YOUTH CENTRE & THE BARN

Green Gyms

Digging for something new to do?

Blackbird Leys Green Gym

Green Gym is a unique scheme to help you become fitter and healthier by taking part in nature conservation activities which will also help improve your local environment. These activities will include things like tree planting, helping out on allotments, or managing local woodland and green spaces. You can meet new people, learn new skills and become more self confident, as well as fitter!

We are planning to set up a Green Gym in Blackbird Leys. Projects will include growing fruit and vegetables on an allotment and developing a tree nursery in a wildlife area. Green Gym sessions are free, and run by a friendly and experienced BTCV leader. Anyone, old or young, whatever your capabilities, is welcome to join. You can join for just an hour or for up to three hours per session.

If you are interested in getting involved in the future or would like more information, please contact:
Katrina Pengelley
Community Project Office, BTCV
16 Bridge Street, Reading, RG4 8AA
T: 0118 947 5049
E: k.pengelley@btcv.org.uk

This initiative is supported by the Blackbird Leys Allotment Society and Oxford City PCT.

Green Gym BTCV

Parish Council News

We still need people of our community to become Parish Councillors. All it involves is one evening meeting per month usually lasting 2 hours. Join in making a difference to our community it's no good standing by commenting on what we do or don't do, become part of the decision-making process. Anyone aged over 18 can become a Councillor, if you are unsure come along to our meetings to see what happens. These are open public meetings and anyone can come, there is a public discussion session to have your say. No-one can be stopped from attending.

There has been no feedback received on the twinning issue mentioned in the last issue or what youngsters want regarding recreational facilities on the estate, WHY aren't you interested??

Green rubbish bags are available free of charge from the Housing office in Cuddesdon Way. All you dog lovers can now also get free bags in which to collect your dogs' poo.

At the last meeting of the Aisle Barn Committee it was suggested that some form of Youth Centre be established there to give youngsters some where to go. It needs £200,000 spent on finishing the building, last estimate from the City Council.

What it also needs is input from those who will use it if and when the project is completed. The committee want to know what your feelings are on the matter, contact the Parish Council and City Councillors to tell them. The next South East Area Committee meeting on Blackbird Leys will be on 5th December at the Leisure Centre, then 6th January at the Barn. Don't miss these dates make your views known.

We would like to thank all those who took part in the Falcon Close clean-up day a lot of rubbish was collected. Perhaps other areas would like to arrange one.

Parish Councillors:

Blackbird Leys	**Northfield Brook**
Brian Lester	Cyril Martin
Bob Avery	Sharon Cole
Gordon Roper	Chris Hatton
Ron Harris	Rae Humberstone
Chris Pill	

Blackbird Leys are entitled to have 14 Parish Councillors at the moment we have 9.
Parish office contact number 01865 734346
9am-6pm Mon-Friday, voice answering after these times.

Brian Lester

Don't forget that you are also represented by City and County Councillors and by an MP. All these people are here to help you and to work for the Leys - if you want to get in touch with any of them check out p14 for their contact details and notices about their regular surgeries where you can drop in and get information. Ed.

Green Fingers

By Stuart Mabbutt

Image courtesy of barrysclipart.com

What can be better at this time of year than the taste of frozen raspberries from the freezer?

Did you waste a lot of your fruit and veg this year because they were maturing faster than you could eat them or give them away? Then maybe purchasing yourself a good freezer is a way of storing more produce until later in the year.

It is true that some things don't freeze well at all, but raspberries freeze exceptionally well. The taste of raspberries isn't lost if you freeze them, and they can taste just as good as having picked them straight from the plant.

Raspberries are very easy to grow compared with some other crops. Some produce their crop in July with other varieties fruiting from September through to November.

Raspberries in July fruit on stems produced during the previous year, whereas the later varieties fruit on stems produced in the spring and summer of the current growing year.

Late fruiting types of raspberries are more resistant to disease, and fruit for a much longer period of time than their earlier counterparts. Birds also like to eat the earlier varieties, whereas they seem to leave the later ones alone, perhaps because there are so many other fruits to be had during the autumn months.

Regardless of what type of raspberries you grow though, all that is needed to maintain them is an annual pruning to remove all fruited stems. The only other thing you need to do is tie any new stems up to wire supports so they don't snap off under the weight of the fruits.

Early fruiters need to be pruned after cropping, with the canes that have carried fruit cut down hard to ground level. The new canes are then tied to wires.

With autumn fruiters it is even easier! You simply cut the whole lot down to ground level in winter. New shoots then grow up from the rootstock to give you a bumper crop later in the year.

Two of my favourite autumn fruiting raspberries are Joan J and Autumn Bliss; they are a trouble free companion in any autumn garden.

So go on, buy yourself a new freezer for Christmas, and enjoy the fruits of your labour into the cold winter months, saving yourself money by reducing your shopping bill too!

Good gardening

Regards,
Stuart Mabbutt

Images courtesy of www.abcteach.com

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Leys Learning Network

Do you feel learning is important?

Has learning made a difference in your life, whether in terms of work or general quality of life?

If you struggled at or didn't get on with school and have educated or are educating yourself…
If you like learning how to do things with computers and showing others…
If you like reading and discussing ideas…
If you are interested in what makes people and society tick…
If you want to be able to really support your childrens' learning as they go through school…
If you work as a teaching assistant or with young people
And you live on Blackbird Leys or Greater Leys…

If you can answer 'yes' to any of these questions perhaps you might want to be a Leys Learning Champion.

Q. What does a Learning Champion do?

Basic commitment

1) Be part of a network of local people which meets together four or five times a year to
- Look at and comment on project ideas to do with learning on the estate, to make sure what we do is effective, relevant and good value for money and to think ahead for the next five to ten years about what is needed.
- Learn more about how the education system works and is funded.
- Develop our own creative learning and have fun doing it:

2) Meet together informally, if convenient, to be a sounding board for people with ideas about learning to talk to local residents and get a feel for what might work here.

3) Promote good and enjoyable learning opportunities to friends, family and neighbours. Word of mouth is the best means of publicity!

Additional responsibilities (optional)

If you wanted to get more involved and take it further, this could include:

1) Supporting each other in learning activities, in whatever area interests you. Take part in new learning activities for your own development.

2) Learning how people learn and developing your own skills as what is called a "peer learner" (i.e. learning among equals) or learning mentor.

3) Take people you know along to places like the BLITZ IT Hub, the library or ABLE Learning Centre and introduce them to the staff there; help them to feel comfortable going to such places and just be a supportive friend as they learn.

4) Be part of the steering groups for local learning projects - this could involve understanding budgets and project planning; learning how to interview and recruit to jobs; issues in managing delivery.

5) Go on visits to other towns and cities to see what local communities are doing in their area and learn from them.

If you feel this is something you would like to do, or you know someone who you think would be ideal, then please contact Jim Barlow of the Leys Learning Network on 07979 733848 (call or send a text).

Want to study at University? Act now!

University graduates often get better jobs, more choice, better salaries and some great experiences. If you want to enrol at university in September 2006 you'll need to be quick - the UCAS deadline for full-time undergraduate applications is 15th January 2006.

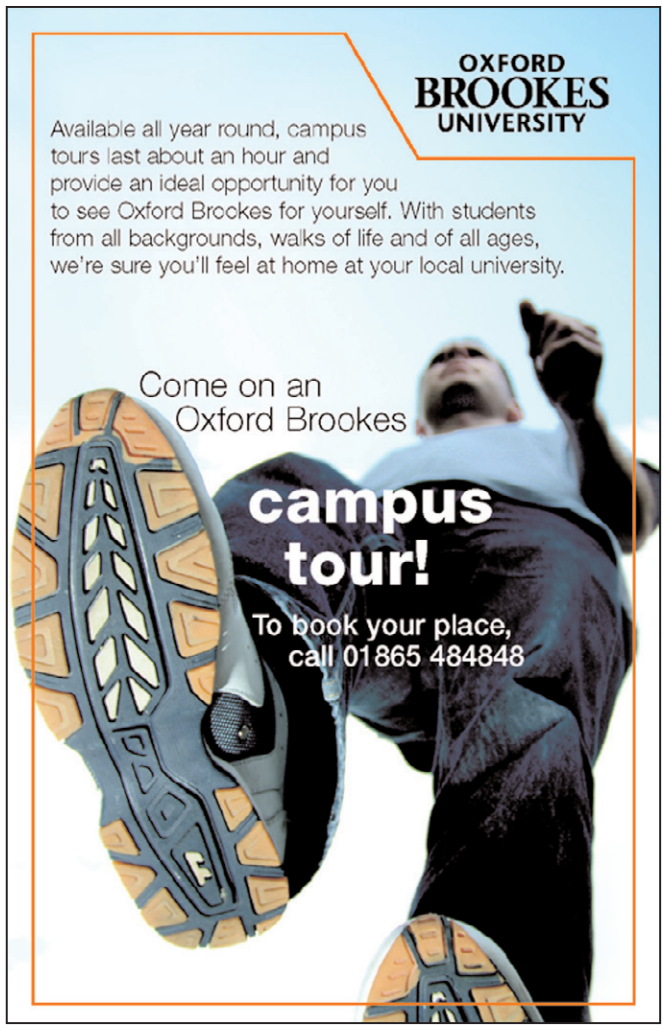
Use the online UCAS system 'ucasapply' to apply for full-time courses:

- First degree
- Foundation degree
- Higher National Diploma or Certificate (HND/HNC)
- Diploma or Certificate of Higher Education (DipHE/CertHE)
- Postgraduate degree or diploma in social work.

If you are at school or college your teacher will be able to give you a 'buzzword' so you can register, if you're not you can still apply online. For details visit www.ucas.com/apply

Apply to study part-time direct through the university you're interested in. Find out about part-time study at Oxford Brookes University from our Admissions Office on 01865 483040 or admissions@brookes.ac.uk

You can request your copy of the Oxford Brookes Undergraduate Prospectus for 2006 from the Student Enquiry Centre on 01865 484848 or query@brookes.ac.uk



Open Evening

Oxford & Banbury Campuses

Thurs 2 Feb 2006, 5 - 8pm

- **Everyone** guaranteed a **warm** welcome
- Information on **all courses** available
- Every **subject on display**
- **Tutors & students** ready to **advise**
- Facilities & Campuses on show

For school leavers, parents & those considering degree & higher education programmes at the college

Please come along and join us

Enquiries 01865 550 550
www.ocvc.ac.uk

OXFORD & CHERWELL VALLEY COLLEGE

FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER 2005 - SUNDAY 15 JANUARY 2006

Cinderella

A classic tale magically retold by Tony Bicât

Tickets from £8.50 (concessions available)

©Illustrations: Korky Paul

OP | OXFORD PLAYHOUSE
01865 305305
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

Your Councillors

Parish Council

Your Councillors are: Chairman, Brian Lester; Vice Chair, Bob Avery; Treasurer, Sharon Cole

Non position holders are: Ron Harris Chris Hatton, Rae Humberstone, Cyril Martin, Chris Pill and Gordon Roper. For further details please contact the Parish Council office on 01865 734346, office hours 8.00am-6.00pm Monday to Friday, or leave a message.

Oxford City Council

Name	Party	Ward	Address	Tel	Email	Surgery
Cllr Lee Cole	Independent Working Class Association	Blackbird Leys Ward	31 Long Ground, GL, OX4 7WS	07771 996945	lee.cole47@ntlworld.com	Every Thursday from 7.30-8.30 at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre
Cllr Rae Humberstone	Labour	Blackbird Leys Ward	75 Little Bury, GL, OX4 7UZ	01865 779678	raehumberstone@btinternet.com	Every Friday at 4.00 at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre
Cllr Stuart Craft	Independent Working Class Association	Northfield Brook				Every Wednesday from 6.30-8.30 at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys

Oxford County Council

Name	Party	Ward	Address	Tel	Email
Val Smith	Labour	Leys & Lye Ward	4 Flaxfield Road BBL, OX4 6QD	01865 396073	val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Barbara Gatehouse	Labour	Leys & Lye Ward	33 Salford Road Old Marston, OX3 0RY	(01865) 240424	barbara.gatehouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk

OCHA

Older person's rented homes available

Oxford Citizens Housing Association has unfurnished, self-contained, studio and one-bedroom accommodation in various areas of Oxford City available for long-term rental to couples and single people aged 55 and over.

All properties are provided with an alarm call system and many schemes have a manager who can provide regular visits to those who require them.

Weekly rents are from approx £75 (inclusive of service charges).

If you would like further information or an application pack please call 01865 77300 or visit www.ocha.org.uk.
Available properties will be offered on a priority basis.

We are also inviting applications for a limited number of sheltered flats in the Iffley area. These are available to let for a limited period (approx two years) on Assured Shorthold Tenancies at similar rent levels. If you are aged 55 or over and interested, we will be happy to provide further information.

Oxford Citizens Housing Association
A: 244 Barns Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 3RW.
T: 01865 773000
E: info@ocha.org.uk
W: www.ocha.org.uk

What do Area committees do?

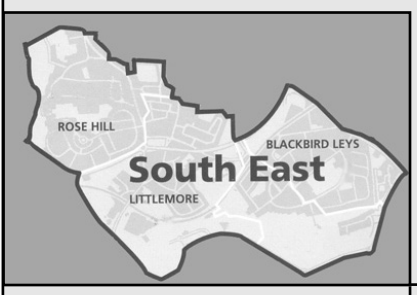
The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:

- abandoned vehicles
- allotments
- car parks
- cemeteries
- community centres
- decisions on planning applications
- ditches and streams
- dog wardens
- parks & countryside management
- public toilets
- street cleaning
- street naming

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

South East Area Committee meetings

Ring 252249 for further information



Monday 5th December
6.00pm - 9.00pm

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

Monday 9th January
6.00pm - 9.00pm

Cardinal House, Rose Hill

Monday 6th February
6.00pm - 9.00pm

The Barn, Blackbird Leys

. . . what's on weekly . . .

Age Resource Desk
The Clockhouse.
Mon,Tues,Thurs, 10.30am - 1pm Computer access for the over 50's. Ring 717614 to book

The Barn Youth Club
Mondays 7.30-9.30pm - ages 13+
Wednesday, 6.30-8.30pm
Held at the Barn.

Brownies: Thursday 6-7.30pm, Holy Family Church Hall
(for 7 to 11 age group)

CAD Drop-In:
Drugs & Alcohol advice, Tues & Fri, 12-4pm, 49 Barns Road
(ox 402919)

Carer and toddler group Until September:
Friday, 1-3pm at the Dovecote. £1

Girls Street Dance:
BBL Leisure Centre, 50p.
13yrs-16yrs:
Tuesdays, 4.45 - 5.45pm
8yrs -12yrs:
Wednesdays, 4.45 - 5.45pm

Girls Aerobics:
BBL Leisure Centre. 50p.
Tuesdays, 6 -7pm, 14 -18 years

Dovecote Afterschool Club:
Monday to Thursday, 3.15 - 4.45pm

Dovecote Saturday Club
(for ages 5-12) 10am-1pm.

Dance Classes at the Barn
Tues 4-5pm (5-11years)
5-6pm (12 years +) £3.30
Freestyle, disco, street-dance.

The Edge - Youth Club
BBL Community Centre.
Wed, 1-4.30pm.
Drop in 7.30-9.30pm

Guides, Friday 7-9pm at the Holy Family Church.
Girls, 10-15 years.
Info: 455970.

1st Blackbird Leys Rainbow Guides
for girls aged 5-7 yrs
Fridays, 5.30-6.30pm
Holy Family Church Hall, Cuddesdon Way.
Contact - Laura 0778 7528120

Holy Family Church:
Sunday service 10am, with lively children's church.

Home-Start New Babies Club: Dovecote on Friday, 10.30-12noon

Junior Edge Project:
4.30 - 6pm, Tuesday and Thursday, BBL Community Centre (Supporting black and mixed heritage children)

Leys Community Church
Sunday service 3.30pm at Holy Family Church.

Leys Youth Football Club:
BBL Leisure Centre on Fridays, 50p.
Boys: School Years 3 to 6: 4pm - 5pm.
School Yrs 7 to 8: 5 - 6pm.
School Yrs 9 to 11: 6 - 7pm.
Girls: (8yrs to 16yrs): 7 - 8pm

Sacred Heart Catholic Church: Mass, every Sunday, 9.30am and 6pm

Self Defence:
6-9pm, Tuesday at the Barn

State Pension Advice Surgery: Leys Linx Centre, 2nd & 4th Monday of the month 9.30am-12.30pm

Swimming - Blackbird Leys Pool
Mondays, 11.30 - 12.30pm:60+ swimming (free).
Tuesdays & Fridays, 12 - 1pm: Water Workout.
Wednesdays, 12 - 1pm: 50+ swimming.
Thursdays 12 -1pm: Duckings (Parent & toddler classes).
Info: Ox 467042

Weight Watchers:
7-8pm, Thursday at the Barn

Slimming World:
New Testament Church of God, Cowley.
Wednesdays, 7pm. Info: Ox 438114

Potters Court Bingo:
Every Monday from 6pm.
Contact Edward on 07913 924579

CELEBRATING THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN TANZANIA

Come with us. Come. In your imagination now travel to Kiagata Parish in Musoma Diocese in northwestern Tanzania. Three days before Christmas an African Christmas Hut (the traditional Christmas Crib in the form of a small African hut) is prepared in the sanctuary of the church. The tall shepherds with their cows and sheep portray a pastoral scene very close to the rural farming community in Kiagata. Bright red, green, and yellow African cloths hang from the ceiling. Long cords hold up rows of pictures and cards. On Christmas Eve afternoon the carved figures of Mary and Joseph are placed in the open hut, "tired" after their long journey from Nazareth.

The Christmas Liturgy begins at nine p.m. The priest reads the Gospel of Luke in Swahili ... "She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." The priest stops. In a small procession with candles an altar boy reverently carries the carved figure of the infant Jesus and places him in the manger. With no electricity in the church the flickering candles dramatically highlight the manger scene.

A wave of singing, clapping and drumming reverberates through the church. From the back of the church a group of Kuria men and women rhythmically dance forward to the beat of shakers and drums. They sing the traditional Kuria song 'We Come to the Home of the Child' just as they do when a baby is born in the village. As they dance in front of the African Christmas hut the women and girls trill with joy. A sea of clapping, trilling, and joyful excitement sweeps through the whole church. After the singing and dancing the priest finishes reading the gospel. All the people sing with joy a popular Swahili Christmas song: 'The Lord Jesus Christ Has Been Born'.

Three people who take the parts of the narrator, the angel, and the shepherds can also read the gospel, and the choir sings. At times a Christmas Pageant Play can be performed after the second reading, after the gospel, or after the night Eucharist itself. These plays are an excellent way of retelling the Christmas story in a contemporary African setting.

Children are a great value in African society. Children are new life. Children are the future. A Swahili saying is children are a blessing. A mother giving birth is a joyful community event. There is an African custom of visiting the newborn infant in his or her home. Visitors bring gifts of money, flour, soap and eggs. As a religious parallel Christians visit the African Christmas hut in church and leave a small donation to honor the Christ Child. "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Yes, sing again: The Lord Jesus Christ Has Been Born. It Is Certain.

By Rev. Joseph Healey, M.M., Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

KWANZAA

Kwanzaa is a colourful seven-day celebration that is observed from December 26th to January 1st each year. It honours African traditions, cultures, and values and it's centered around family and community. It is a special festival that was created by Dr. Maulena Karenga in the United States in 1966 - today, Kwanzaa is celebrated by over 18 million people around the world. The word "Kwanzaa" comes from the Swahili word meaning 'first' or 'first fruits of the harvest' and it mirrors many harvest festivals that are celebrated in various African countries.

Kwanzaa is celebrated through singing, speaking, dancing and reciting traditional. Stories. Kwanzaa is built on seven principles that are commonly known as 'Nguzo Saba', which include unity, collective work and responsibility, creativity and faith.

The point of Kwanzaa is not one of gift giving or religious celebration, but a commemoration of heritage and togetherness. Family and friends should find Kwanzaa to be a time of sharing and pulling together. The guiding principles teach values often lost in a more modern and solitary society. Since the original ideas were to bring forth the harvest, the guiding principles bring people together to remind us how important we are to each other.

Thanks to www.lbcma.org.uk and www.oxford.gov.uk for this information.

. . . Church News . . .

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Serving Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Garsington & Cuddesdon.
Priest-in-charge: Fr. David Hartley, Tel 01865 779658.

Thursday December 8th
Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, Mass 9.10am in St John Fisher School and 7.00pm in church.
This will be followed by a meeting for parents who would like their children to receive their First Holy Communion next summer.

Regular services

Sunday Mass	9.30am and 6.00pm
Weekday Mass	Monday 9.00am
	Tuesday 7.30pm
	Thursday 7.00pm
	Friday 9.00am
Confessions	Saturday 10.30am

Christmas Services

Monday 19th December, 7.30pm
Advent Reconciliation service

Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th December

10.00am	Mass
10.30am	Confessions
6.00pm	Vigil Mass - at an easier time for parents with young children
12 Midnight	Midnight Mass

Christmas Day, Sunday 25th December

9.30am	Mass of the Day

Sunday 1st January 2006

9.30am	Mass
6.00pm	Mass

Next year Sacred Heart will be 40 years old, so we are creating a booklet of recollections of the earlier years. Do you have any memories to share or photographs you can lend us? There will be some special celebrations and we hope that many members of the community with links to the Church will be able to attend.

The Church of the Holy Family

Christmas Services

Dates to note:
11 December at 6.30 pm - a service of healing
15 December at 7.30 pm - join in Radio Oxford Carol Service at the Church of the Holy Family

18 December at 6.30 pm - Community Carol service in the church
24 December at 11.30 pm - Midnight communion of Christmas
25 December at 10.00 am - Christmas Day eucharist

1 January at 10.00 am - Covenant Service

All are warmly welcome to attend.

Any enquiries to:
The Rev'd Fleur Houston (774672)
The Rev'd David Parry (778728)

Regular Services

All are welcome to our regular Sunday communion services at 10.00 am - there is special provision for children. And if you prefer a more meditative style of worship why not come along at 6.30 pm, for Time Out - for those of us who need a bit of space.

On Tuesdays at 9.00am we have short morning prayers for anyone to attend. On Wednesdays we have prayers for the Leys community at 1.00 pm.

Every Sunday there are services with Eucharist at 10.00 am; for part of the service, children may attend our lively children's church. At 6.30 pm Time Out is a short reflective service with different styles of worship each week.

The Leys Community Church

The Leys Community Church is a lively and relaxed church meeting at 3.30pm on a Sunday afternoon. We will be meeting at the Holy Family Church.

Our Sunday meetings include special activities for children and young people.

We believe that people are important and that Jesus can make a difference to our daily lives. If you'd like to know any details about the church, our community work or would simply like a chat then please feel free to phone Richard and Kate Colbrook on (01865) 714153.

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

Work is now underway on the re-development of Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, thanks to £750,000 boost from a successful Oxford City Council bid to Sport England.
The money has been matched by Oxford City Council who will re-develop the existing facilities within the leisure centre. To mark the beginning of the project, a ground-breaking ceremony took place on Wednesday 9th November.

The new centre, which will have a multi activity hub, with a family room and community kitchen, and completely re-furbished gym and fitness room, is due to be fully completed by the end of March 2006. The gym part of the complex is due to be open to the public by February 2006.

This is the largest Sport England grant to be awarded in the South East and will contribute to the local campaigns encouraging local residents to take part in regular exercise. The centre will employ specialist outreach staff to work in Barton, Rose Hill and Wood Farm to run activities for young people. They will also run sessions at Blackbird Leys for women, ethnic minority groups and older people.

Councillor Bill Baker, Executive Member for Corporate Governance and Procurement, says: "I am delighted that we were able to secure the funding from Sport England and that the City Council were able to match the funding. This new centre will be a vital resource for the community and I hope that the residents of Blackbird Leys and surrounding areas use it to its full potential. This project demonstrates our continued commitment to providing the people of Oxford with excellent sporting and community facilities."

The contractor for Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre is Leadbitter and the project managers are Ridge.

Photo:
The ground-breaking ceremony which marked the start of the project.
© Leadbitter

A Christmas Gift....

If you've just set up business for yourself - or if you're thinking of taking that bold step in the new year - here's a Christmas Gift from the Steps to Success Project just for you!

FREE LUNCH!

CfBT and the Potential Project are handing out Free Tickets to a Sole Trader's Survival Kit Workshop which will happen in January. So if you've always wanted to know What-To-Do-To-Stay-Afloat, if you'd like to tank up on Marketing, Tax, and other issues for the self-employed, call 07979 266 662 to book your place today.

...for those who like to do their own thing

SOLE TRADER'S SURVIVAL KIT WORKSHOP

Venue: The Barn, Nightingale Avenue.
Date: 24th January, 2006.
Fees: Free (booking essential)
Time: 9am to 3 pm.

Santa's Mobile: 07979 244 662

Healthy Living Initiative

HLI is working with the Community Caterers Network on a new Food Bank project. The Food Bank will distribute surplus food from retailers to community catering projects that need it.

The Healthy Living Initiative is preparing to undertake an evaluation of the work undertaken in the last few years, so keep an eye out for opportunities to take part.

KARATE
Keep Fit!
Self Defence!
Self Discipline!
All ages and all standards
Beginners Always Welcome
First Week of Training Free!
(The Barn, Nightingale Ave)
For Info Call:
07970 234349
E-mail:
kelvin@kelvin2808.wanadoo.co.uk

Swimming 'the Channel'

I have almost finished the sponsored 22-mile channel swim. It does seem a long-time since I started and now I have great respect for all those swimmers who have competed the real channel swim.
It has taken me several weeks and I have completed 2,190 lengths, just 10 more to go. I did not have to tolerate fish, seagulls, seaweed or cold salt water (the pool is a very comfortable 31degrees), though on several occasions members of staff thought it amusing to turn on the cold-water hose to simulate rainy weather.

I appreciate the support the staff; parents and pupils who use Blackbird Leys Pool have given me. A donation bucket has been on the poolside everytime I have been teaching and has raised nearly £200.00. I have also received three large donations from the staff at Northfield School, the landlord of The Bell at Hampton Poyle (my local pub) and another from Wayne Prescott, a resident of Blackbird Leys who under the pseudonym Jonnie Blake is a personal trainer.

The Pool is kindly organising a raffle. The first prize is a pool party, second a course of child swimming lessons and the third a family swim ticket. The tickets are on sale at the Pool for £1.00 per ticket. All the proceeds along with donations and sponsorship will be forwarded to the charity ASPIRE SPINAL INJURIES. The charity provides emotional and therapeutic care to children and adults who suffer from spinal injuries.

It is not too late to donate, any last minute donations will be gratefully received - please call in or contact Blackbird Leys Pool.

My sincere thanks for all the money given. The final total raised will be in the next copy of Leys News and will be displayed on the pool's noticeboard.

Many thanks,
Beverley Oakley

See www.aspire.org.uk for more information about the charity Beverley is raising money for.